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## **Jordan**

### **Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative**

### **FAIRS Country Report**

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**Report Highlights:**

This report covers updates to Jordan's food and agricultural import regulations and standards.

## **Section I. Food Laws:**

Jordan has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 2000. The accession to membership coincided with structural reforms, economic and legislative, designed to match international standards and requirements. As a result, the current food control regime in Jordan falls under two laws: The Agriculture Law No. 44 of 2002 and Jordanian Food Control Law No. 32 of 2003. These laws were adopted at the Aqaba Special Economic Customs Center in May 2002 and at Amman Customs Center in January 2004.

Inspection criteria are codified into a computerized system, ASYCUDA. This system is being applied at all major border crossing points as the infrastructure is completed. A border committee comprised of representatives from the following agencies inspects imported agricultural and food products:

- The Jordan Food and Drug Administration (JFDA: [www.jfda.jo](http://www.jfda.jo)),
- Ministry of Agriculture (MoA: [www.moa.gov.jo](http://www.moa.gov.jo)),
- Customs Department (JCD: [www.customs.gov.jo](http://www.customs.gov.jo)).

The Jordan Institute for Standards and Metrology (JISM [www.jism.gov.jo](http://www.jism.gov.jo)) has recently limited its role for food to only regulation and standards. Food products are classified in three tiers according to the associated health risk. The criteria and the levels of inspection are based on three categories: high, medium and low risk.

- High-risk products, 80 – 100 percent inspection
- Medium risk products, 25 – 50 percent inspection
- Low risk products, 5 – 10 percent inspection

In all cases, a document review is mandatory regardless of the category or level of inspection.

Importers are required to ensure food safety so as to minimize risk to human health associated with trade in the form of microbial, parasitical and fungal contamination. Import consignments are routinely tested for radiation levels and chemical contaminants, including heavy metals, hormones and residue from medicines. Testing for food additives is routinely conducted. Less frequent testing is done for pesticide residues.

Importers of drugs, including vaccines and sera for human use, are required to meet the Ministry of Health's technical regulations. Importers of veterinary medicines, sera, vaccines, pesticides, meat, fertilizer, animal feed, and seedlings are required to meet Ministry of Agriculture technical regulations. A committee comprised of officials from the Ministries of Health and Agriculture and the Customs Department carry out inspections of food and agriculture products at border points. Jordan applies internationally recognized standards when these are available.

## **Section II. Labeling Requirements:**

A. Labeling requirements are set by the Jordanian Institute of Standards and Metrology (JISM). Legal requirements for labeling are fairly standard, although a statement of ingredients on processed foods is not required. All labels must either be in Arabic or have a stick-on label in Arabic. In general, the label should contain the name of the product, the manufacturer's name and address, net weight,

fortifying matter (like added vitamins and minerals), lot number and “use before” or “best before” date. Local labeling requirements do not include Recommended Daily Intake (RDIs).

The label is scrutinized at the border point. The law holds an importer fully accountable for product label contents. A shipment might be rejected based on ambiguous labeling content even if it is only a printing error.

**Shelf life:** This requirement was replaced by the -“Best Before”- standard, but a technical regulation issued by JISM does interpret “Best before” as expiry date. No food is permitted for sale if its best before date is reached. Nutritional labeling is mandatory in certain categories of food including infant formula, food for dietary use, etc. The Jordanian Government’s website, [www.jism.gov.jo](http://www.jism.gov.jo), provides a search tool for key words that indicate the standard number for that item. Standards can be purchased from the JISMO.

### **Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations:**

No specific restrictions are applied to the type of packaging used. No restrictions are applied to either packaging or container type at the Port of Aqaba (**Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority**). In terms of discharge in port, the weight limit for use of the gantry crane is 30.5 tons. Units weighing more than 30.5 tons will be discharged using shore cranes. A number of frozen meat and fish shipments have been found to have had “freezer burn” due to improper packaging or sealing of frozen products. This jeopardizes imports of these products.

### **Section IV. Food Additives Regulations:**

Food additives are regulated by JISM and JFDA, but JFDA is the one responsible for its application. In general, permissible additives and their concentrations are those approved by the *Codex Alimentarius* Commission. Codex standard number 192 is the reference for food additives whether the food in question has a technical standard that states the specific food additives to be used or not. In the case that a certain food additive is not listed in the Codex standard 192, then Jordan typically applies the related EU regulation.

### **Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants:**

Pesticides in Jordan are regulated by Ministry of Agriculture (MoA [www.moa.gov.jo](http://www.moa.gov.jo)), Plant Protection Directorate/ Pesticides Division. Each imported pesticide shall be analyzed for conformity in composition and concentration, using the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations’ (FAO) standards if it is an agricultural pesticide, and using the World Health Organization’s (WHO) if it is a pesticide used for public health (for example, insect sprays, mosquito repellent, etc.)

Pesticides residue in the food chain in Jordan is a sensitive issue. There is only one laboratory in Jordan that is capable of testing for pesticide residues in fresh fruits and vegetables, and its turn-around time is about two weeks. Therefore, it is not possible to test fresh products and get a result before the fresh products are consumed. However, non-perishable local and imported agricultural products may be tested for pesticide residue. The technical standards for food and agricultural products require that a pesticide residue not exceed the recommended maximum residue levels established by the *Codex Alimentarius* Commission.

### **Section VI. Other Regulations and Requirements:**

Any imported agricultural or food product may be inspected and tested to ensure that it is fit for human consumption. Virtually all prepared and mixed foods are tested at the border.

The JFDA has the authority to inspect food products at the retail and wholesale distribution levels. A representative may enter any place and collect samples for testing. If a product fails to meet technical requirements or is found unfit for human consumption, it is removed from distribution channels and destroyed.

## **Section VII. Other Specific Standards:**

Jordan Institution for Standards and Metrology (JISM) is the official body for the preparation and publication of Jordanian Standards. The main tasks of JISM are to (i) prepare, approve, revise and amend Jordanian mandatory or voluntary standards and monitor their application; (ii) maintain a national system for metrology and supervise its implementation; (iii) approve quality marks and certificates of conformity; (v) adopt and approve standards of other countries and of Arab, regional and international organizations, provided that such standards were issued in Arabic or English; and (vi) to cooperate and coordinate with Arab, regional and international institutions in the area of standardization and metrology. JISM is a participating member of the Arab Organization for Industrial Development and Mining (AIDMO), a corresponding member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), a corresponding member of the International Organization for Legal Metrology (OIML), and a contact point for the *Codex Alimentarius* Commission.

All imported foods should conform to the Jordanian standards issued by JISM. Except for wheat and barley which are purchased by the GoJ, all other agricultural products may be imported by the private sector if the products meet local quality standards, which are set by JISM on the basis of the *Codex Alimentarius* (<http://www.codexalimentarius.net>, [www.jism.gov.jo](http://www.jism.gov.jo)). In 2003, JISM instituted a pre-shipment inspection program, which is entirely voluntary for food importers. Import licenses are not required for most imported goods. Some products require prior approval from either the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Agricultural products for which prior approval is required from the Ministry of Agriculture are live animals, fresh, chilled and frozen meat, frozen animal semen, and powdered milk for adults and children.

The Ministry of Agriculture requires (and issues) an import permit for animals and animal products to ensure compliance with local health standards issued by JISM. Importation of rice, sugar, and wheat derivatives has been liberalized. The private sector may import these items into Jordan, and the GoJ has done away with customs duties and taxes on these products to ease the economic hardship on consumers. Alcoholic beverages may be imported into Jordan, but high tariffs are applied (50-200 percent) to generate revenues for the government.

## **Section VIII. Copyright and/or Trademark Laws:**

The legal system facilitates and protects the acquisition and disposition of all property rights.

Prior to its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), Jordan passed several new laws to improve the protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), patents, copyrights and trademarks. Registration of Copyright and Trademarks in Jordan is not obligatory; these rights are still protected even if not registered.

TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights)-consistent laws now protect trade secrets, plant varieties and semiconductor chip designs. The law requires registration of copyrights, patents and trademarks. Copyrights must be registered at the National Library, a part of the Ministry of Culture. Patents must be registered with the Registrar of Patents and Trademarks at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Jordan is in the process of acceding to the Patent Cooperation Treaty and to the protocol relating to the Madrid Agreement concerning the registration of trademarks. The GoJ is preparing appropriate adjustments to fit international requirements.

Jordan has been a full member of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) since May 1972, and a full member of the Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), since October 24, 2004. So far, 31 varieties have been registered by the office.

### **Section IX. Import Procedures:**

As a member of the WTO, Jordan reduced its import tariff ceiling to a maximum of 30% for food and agricultural goods with the exception of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products for which the maximum duty is 200%. Under the terms of the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement (FTA), import duties and other trade barriers between Jordan and the United States were phased out on January 2010, since the US-Jordan FTA reached full tariff exemption. Companies licensed and operating under the FTA in Jordan gain quota and duty-free access to the U.S. market and benefit from special import provisions for raw inputs, just as the advantages applied under the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs). See ([www.customs.gov.jo](http://www.customs.gov.jo)).

## **CUSTOMS VALUATION:**

The customs law of 1999 was amended in March 2000 to include GATT/WTO compliant criteria for customs valuation, which is based on certified invoices and to make the valuation process more transparent. The law provides for a customs officer's mandate to use arbitrary valuation while still rewarding those who uncover invoice misreporting and imposes penalties on importers.

The customs valuation price is CIF-based. The value of the imported good is converted into JD at the official central bank exchange rate (1 JD = USD 1.41). In some cases, invoice or export discounts have been included in the valuation by the customs department. Still, the exporter should consult the local importer to determine how to best obtain any such discounts or rebates ([www.customs.gov.jo](http://www.customs.gov.jo)).

## **IMPORT TAXES AND OTHER RELATED FEES:**

Imported products and locally produced goods are subject to a 16 percent value-added tax (VAT).

The VAT on imported products is based on the cost, insurance, and freight (CIF) value at the border, but goods such as pharmaceutical products and agricultural products are exempt from the 16 percent sales tax. There is a special sales tax that applies to specific items such as, but not limited to, vehicles, tobacco products, alcoholic beverages and lubricants. The tax rate on these items varies. Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages are subject to a 13 percent general sales tax in addition to the special sales tax. Non-basic foodstuffs are subject to a 4 percent general sales tax. For a complete description of these commodities and detailed lists of the general and special sales tax, please visit Jordan's General Sales Tax Department's website at [www.gst.gov.jo](http://www.gst.gov.jo).

**Under law 114/2004, pertinent import license changes included:**

1. Dual-uses Items
2. Non-commercial shipments exceeding JD 2,000 in value
3. Dried milk for food processing (Ministry of Agriculture)

**The following are exempt from import license**

1. Biscuits of all types
2. Mineral water
3. Items requiring prior clearance from specific authorities.
4. Goods entering the country under temporary entry status, bonded goods and goods benefiting from investment promotion

The provisions of article No (4) /law 114/2004 stipulate that all Jordanian and foreign trading companies must obtain a permit for customs clearance purposes from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, except foreign companies which are not licensed and operating in Jordan. At the Ministry, a complete and updated list of all import requirements and provisions is periodically issued. For non-trading entities such as banks, hospitals and hotels, the ministry issues a special, "limited" card that allows the import of goods specific to that entity's purpose

Goods entering the country under temporary entry status, bonded goods and goods benefiting from the investment promotion law are exempt from import licenses (refer to [www.jordaninvestment.com](http://www.jordaninvestment.com)).

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**Import / Export Documentation**

According to Article 31 of the Customs Law of 1998 and its amendments, every customs declaration must include the following:

- Maritime or air bill of lading.
  - Commercial invoice indicating value, weight, freight and insurance charges etc.
  - All invoices should be notarized by the Jordanian diplomatic mission in the country of origin. Certification by the local chamber of commerce is sufficient, subject to the approval of the customs department director, in cases where a Jordanian consulate is not available.
- A notarized certificate of origin issued by the relevant authority in the exporting country
- Value declaration form for shipments exceeding JD 2,000 (USD 2,820)

The customs department may request other documents related to the shipment as needed.

All invoices should describe the imported goods in Arabic.

Jordan Customs developed and launched the Customs Integrated Tariff System (CITS) in August 2005, website: <http://www.customs.gov.jo> to assist importers. Importers can use this system to obtain import tariffs, import conditions and commodity trade agreements. For example, to determine the seasonal custom tariffs for apples imported from the United States in, say, June under the Jordan–U.S. FTA, log into CITS for information pertaining to commodity trade, customs and tariff and commercial agreements as well as the governmental requirements for these commodities from the ministries and departments. The information pertaining to June apples imports will show that trade between the U.S. and Jordan benefits from a lower customs tariff in June, while in July importers must pay an extra *ad valorem* fee (this measure is to protect local production), and approval of the Ministry of Agriculture is required to import apples.

The (CITS) System allows an importer to review all regulations and requirements of the commodity's trade; all (CITS) system information is in Arabic and English.

The (CITS) system provides information on the trade activity and mechanisms for searching for goods through the Customs Tariff Tables, trade agreements, coding decisions, proclamations, circulations and requirements related to the Customs Tariff Harmonized System.

### **Special Import Provisions**

Pre-import clearance is required for certain goods. The clearance, once obtained, acts as an import license. However, these clearances are not automatic.

The relevant pre-import license-issuing agency and the respective goods include:

- Ministry of Industry and Trade (these are given out in the form of import licenses): Rice, flour and its by-products, sugar, wheat, barley and corn;

- Ministry of Agriculture: Animal genetics, live animals, fresh/frozen meat, embalmed wild animals, imported milk products from countries engaged in bilateral trade protocols with Jordan;
- Ministry of Health: all drugs and antibiotics, food supplements for athletes, potassium bromide, food dyes, frozen ice cream, baby food and mil.???

If a shipment is rejected, there is an appeal system, which is adjudicated by the ministry under which the rejection took place.

### **Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts:**

Jordan Food & Drug Directorate

Tel: (962-6) 4612663

Fax: (962-6) 4612663

Web-site: [www.jfda.jo](http://www.jfda.jo)

Ministry of Industry and Trade

Tel: (962-6) 560-7191/5663774

Fax: (962-6) 560-4691

Web-site: [www.mit.gov.jo](http://www.mit.gov.jo)

Ministry of Agriculture

Veterinary Services Directorate

OR

Plant Protection Directorate

Tel: (962-6) 5686151

Fax: (962-6) 5686310

Web-site: [www.moa.gov.jo](http://www.moa.gov.jo)

Jordan Institute of Standards and Metrology

Tel: (962-6) 5680139

Fax: (962-6) 5681099

Web-site: [www.jismo.gov.jo](http://www.jismo.gov.jo)

Jordan Customs Department

P.O.Box 90, Amman, Jordan

Tel: (962-6) 462-3186/8; 462-4394/6

Fax: (962-6) 464-7791

E-mail: [Customs@Customs.gov.jo](mailto:Customs@Customs.gov.jo)

Web-site: <http://www.customs.gov.jo>

### **Ministry of Environment**

**Tel:** + (962-6) 5560113

**Fax:** + (962-6) 5560288

Web-site: <http://www.moenv.gov.jo/>



**Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority**

P.O.Box 2565, Aqaba 77110, Jordan

**Tel:** + (962-6) 3 203 5757/8

**Fax:** + (962-6) 3 203 0912

Web-site: <http://www.aqabazone.com/>

**Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts:**

For further help, please contact the Office of Agricultural Affairs, American Embassy, PO Box 354, Amman, Jordan, Phone: + (962-6) 5906056, Fax: + (962-6) 5906223, E-Mail: [AgAmman@fas.usda.gov](mailto:AgAmman@fas.usda.gov) - [Mohamed.khraishy@usda.gov](mailto:Mohamed.khraishy@usda.gov) - [khraishym@state.gov](mailto:khraishym@state.gov)

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